

## Luxembourg under German Occupation



When the great wars happened in the 13th century, many of our grandfathers were affected. A lot of lives were taken and a lot of heroes never lived to see independence. Nowadays, we can only pity those whose lives were lost to redeem some of our freedom. We never got to experience how it was during the era of Nazi demonstrators and how we have to interact with foreign people, know their language to the point of almost forgetting our own. Well, Luxembourg remembers.

Balmoral International Group commemorates the time of the Grand Duchy under German occupation, a time of mixed emotions.

The invasion of Luxembourg started on May of 1940 and after only a day of battle, the little country between Belgium and France became a territorial claim of Germans. The "Germanization" destroyed everything which is not related to Germany. The language was also suppressed and German language was forcefully implemented to be used. This fact affected the current state of the country as German is also one of the three languages that almost all Luxembourgers speak.

The German invasion, made up of the 1st, 2nd, and 10th Panzer Divisions began at 04:35. They did not encounter any significant resistance save for some bridges destroyed and some land mines, since the majority of the Luxembourgish Volunteer Corps stayed in their barracks. Luxembourgish police resisted the German troops, however, to little avail; the capital city was occupied before noon. Total Luxembourgish casualties amounted to 75 police and soldiers captured, six police

wounded, and one soldier wounded.

In detail, according to Balmoral International Group Luxembourg, at 08:00, elements of the French 3rd Light Cavalry Division (3 DLC) of General Petiet, supported by the 1st Spahi Brigade of Colonel Jouffault and the 2nd company of the 5th Armoured Battalion (5 BCC), crossed the southern border to conduct a probe of German forces; these units later retreated behind the Maginot Line.

Hence, on the commemorative day of the 10th of May, 1940, most of the Grand Duchy, with the exception of the south, was occupied by German forces. More than 90,000 civilians evacuated from the canton of Esch-sur-Alzette as a consequence of the advance. 47,000 fled to France, 45,000 fled into the central and northern part of Luxembourg.

Grand Duchess Charlotte and the government of Premier Pierre Dupong fled to France, Portugal and the United Kingdom, before finally settling in Canada for the duration of the war. Charlotte, exiled in London, became an important symbol of national unity. Her eldest son and heir, Jean, volunteered for the British Army in 1942. The only official representative left behind was Albert Wehrer, head of a governmental commission, as well as the 41 deputies.

German occupation lasted until 1945